



ACCESS ALLIANCE ARTS REPORT 2022 – 23



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The Peterson Foundation awarded Access Alliance \$250,000 over five years (April 2022 to March 2027), providing \$50,000 annually to support Expressive Arts Programs for newcomers.

With this support, we are strengthening our capacity to deliver expressive arts programming for immigrants and refugees. We are using the funds to invest in professional development, purchase art materials, and provide accessibility resources such as language interpretation, childminding, refreshments, and transportation. We have also hired art therapists and community artists to lead inclusive, culturally responsive programming.

Arts-based approaches have long been central to our work with immigrants, refugees, women, and their families. These programs continue to play a key role in promoting integration, resilience, and mental well-being.

As a result of the program, clients reported:

- Feeling more connected to a safe, trusting community, which helped reduce social isolation
- Greater awareness of available healthcare and mental health supports
- Increased knowledge of stress management and coping strategies
- Improved mental well-being through a stronger sense of belonging

At the organizational level, healthcare providers enhanced their understanding of arts-based practices. This has improved their ability to offer a broader range of mental health supports, particularly for clients experiencing trauma and/or violence.

This program builds on the success of previous initiatives, strengthening the delivery of mental health programming at Access Alliance and among our partner organizations. It continues to amplify our capacity to provide responsive, culturally relevant mental health services.



Annual Outcome Statistics

235+ Reached
510+ Encounters

190 + Adult participants
40 Children participants

39 Art-Based

11 Virtual sessions
28 In-person sessions

8 Art-Based Facilitators

5 Art Therapists
1 Music Therapist
2 Community Artists



AFGHAN

REFUGEE CLINIC PROGRAM



With the ongoing Afghan refugee influx commencing in 2021, Access Alliance teamed up with COSTI Immigration Services to set up a hotel-based primary care clinic. It was reported that there was a lack of specific programming on mental health in a language suitable for clients. In response,

Access Alliance hosted eight art-making and health navigation sessions to develop skills to manage stress and anxiety and share information about the Canadian healthcare system.

In, parallel, the team ran an art-based children's program developed during the program acknowledging the need for inter-generational programming. Photos: Glimpse of activities facilitated during the program. Participants are being led in a clay making activity to express their strengths. Facilitators observe art-making helped participants retain healthcare knowledge and were more open to information that was shared.

"Since we are new to Canada, we have a lot of stresses and anxieties. This program was tailored to us in sharing about the healthcare system, how to access a doctor. I feel more hope about my future"

- Clinic Participant

LGBTQ+ NEWCOMER PROGRAM & WORKSHOPS

In partnership with Friends of Ruby, a transitional housing program for LGBTQ+ youth, funding supported eight expressive arts sessions for newcomer LGBTQ+ youth (see photo on right). Participants engaged in various art modalities to explore identity, build community support, practice self-compassion, and collectively improve their mental well-being. This pilot will help shape future LGBTQ+ programming.

In collaboration with Shadowland Theatre, Access Alliance's LGBTQ+ Drop-In Centre hosted a lantern-making workshop for the Spring Equinox, with over 62 participants attending. Due to its success, we extended the workshop during March Break for children aged 6-12 at AccessPoint on Jane. Each year participants are invited to showcase their lanterns during the "Light it Up" celebration.



ONGOING LONG-TERM IMPACTS



- **Sustainability of Art-Based Programs** will be supported by hiring of part-time Community Program Worker to develop and implement art-based programs focusing on improving the mental wellbeing of newcomers.
- **Educate 10+ healthcare providers** including health coaches, mental health counsellors, and primary care practitioners on art-based modalities to enhance knowledge on how to support those living with trauma.
- **Increase capacity to contract art therapists and community artists** to co-facilitate programs with mental health staff that are culturally appropriate and trauma-informed..
- **Offer inter-disciplinary programs** to a variety of populations Access Alliance is currently serving by using art-based practice as a platform to improve mental wellbeing will amplify the services.
- **Enhance organizational capacity** to develop an inventory of art-based resources and materials to offer art-based programs more frequently using a variety of fine art and expressive art mediums will sustain arts programs long term.

Thank you to the Peterson Foundation for financially supporting expressive arts initiatives at Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services.



How are you? Just wonder
 Hello Honey.
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 you are, you contact to
 but foot forward &



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